*Advent – Great Adventure - Psalms*

*David – David & the Psalms,* Fr. J. Ponessa

*Fathers – Praying the Psalms with the Holy Fathers,* P. Celano

*SK = Chinese Bible*

*SN = Special Notes*

*CCC= Catholic Catechism*

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| **A** | **The Sacredness and Uniqueness of the Jerusalem Temple**   * Jerusalem lies at the heart of the Christian faith; it is also at the centre of God’s salvific plan. * The Mosaic Law established the tradition of religious pilgrimages: it states that one must travel to Jerusalem for the 3 annual festivals of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. * Our yearning for God urges us to go towards God’s dwelling place; His earthly throne and the Ark of the Covenant. * Most temples are built on mountains (Capitoline sits on top of one of Rome’s seven mountains; Athen’s Parthenon sits atop the acropolis; the Jerusalem Temple locates on top of Mt. Moriah). Pilgrims, who often risk robbery or death, commit themselves to treacherous journeys to these mountains. The first person in the group to see the Temple is proclaimed “The King” or “Le Roi” in French; thus the name “Leroy”. What an honour and a great joy! * Upon arrival at the Temple, the pilgrims would gather for the sacrifice, and a the close they would stand as the priest lifted his hands in the form of a “shin”, the letter beginning “Shaddai” (Almighty God), and he would put the Lord’s name upon them. Such was the high point and goal of the pilgrimage. * 15 Psalms, 120-134, are sung for the Feast of Tabernacles. It’s called “gradualis” in Latin, meaning “A Song of Ascents”” or “Songs of Degrees” or of “Bringing up”; songs that signify the sequential progression or the deepening of understanding. * The “Songs of Degrees” are sung during the pilgrimage. Fifteen literal steps mark the final approach to the Temple, and it has been suggested that the pilgrims sang the fifteen songs of ascents while slowly ascending the stairs. Evidently, Psalm 134 is written as a part sung by the priest. The Responsorial Psalms during mass have been called “gradualis” as they were sung at the altar. | SN1  David p 159  Lev 23:4  QS7 p 47  David p 161  QS7 p 47  David p 161  QS7 p 47-48  David p 162 |
| **B** | **Starting Out (Ps 120-121)**   * Psalm 121 is often called the “Traveler’s Psalm”: “The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in” (Ps 121:8). * (Ps 121:1-6) The psalmist cries out to God for deliverance; he doesn’t keep his eyes on his problem or turn them inward, rather he lifts his eyes “to the hills” – to Jerusalem. He seeks help from the one who can provide refuge. We are travelers in this world who also need to seek God’s refuge in our journey. | RS7Q2  RS7Q2 & 3 |
| **C** | **The Journey to Zion (Ps 122-125, 130)**   * (Ps 122:3-4) The three annual pilgrimages were decreed by God for the purpose of giving thanks to the Lord. * (Ps 122:5-9) For the sake of Jerusalem, all those who love God and “my enemies and friends”. * (Ps 123) One must not focus on the enemies but lift one’s eyes to God when facing injustice and oppression. One looks to God to find mercy: not to the one mistreating him, but to the hand of God. * (Ps 124-125) The world’s criticism attacks as fiercely as the strongest waves; however, those who put their trust in God are as immoveable as Mt. Zion … their faith holds them strong because they are surrounded by God’s protection as Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains. * (Ps 130) A reflection on the journey to Zion: humility, “If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?”; yearning, “my soul waits for the Lord, more than those who watch for morning”; trust, “for with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem”. | RS7Q4  RS7Q5  RS7Q5  RS7Q6 |
| **D** | **The Goal and Blessing (Ps 133-134)**   * (Ps 133) The journey ends in deep satisfaction at the blessings of brotherly unity and the blessings of life bestowed on Israel through the priestly worship. They depart in praise, calling on the Levites to continue praising the Lord through the night in the Temple. * The Aaronic blessing (Num 6:22-26): its rich blessing overflows in the Song of Ascents: “blessing”, “watch over them”, “ His face will shine on them” (something seeks and yearns by the pilgrims), “peace”. * The blessing we receive in mass is similar to the one received by the pilgrims. At the end of mass, the priest raises his hand to bless us, “the mass is ended, go in peace to love and serve the Lord!” As the pilgrims were dismissed in blessing and peace to return to their homes, so we are blessed and dismissed in peace. | RS&Q7  RS7Q8-9  RS7Q9 |

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| 1. Melchizedek to prefigure salvation | Gen 14:17-20 |
| 1. Abraham sacrifices his son prefigures the sacrifice of Christ must occur at the heart of Jerusalem | Gen 22 |
| 1. Solomon builds the Temple according to God’s instructions: location and design | 2Chronicles 3:1  1 Chronicles 21:18, 28:19  Ps 76:1-3 |
| 1. Shiloh was a centre of sacrifice in the ancient world but was abandoned by God, and was eventually destroyed by the Philistines. | 1Sam 1:3, Ps 78:60  Jer 7:12-15 |
| 1. The Samaritans have different understanding of Leviticus 23; they built their temple on Mt. Gerizim. The Israelites objected to their act of making sacrifices there. John Hyrcanus, the Jewish leader, demolished this temple in 128 BC. Others could only offer sacrifice in its neighbourhood. | David p 160 |
| 1. In 587 BC, the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem; therefore, sacrifices had been terminated. Upon its reconstruction, sacrifices resumed. |  |
| 1. Jerusalem was destroyed again in 70 AD by the Romans. Jesus had predicted its destruction and reconstruction in 3 days. He will rebuild the Temple himself; the apostolic Church of Christ; the Roman Catholic Church. The eternal sacrifice continues here through the celebration of mass and sacraments. | Lk 19:41, 2Sam 15:30  Jn 2:19  BXVI, Jesus of Nazareth II, pp 28-41 |
| 1. Analyzing today’s Church: other religions, the threat of terrorism |  |